

NATION

Continue fight for equality, envoy says

THE struggle for gender equality in the country still has a long way to go, United States Ambassador Walter North (pictured) says.

He told the PNG Women's Forum in Port Moresby that the country must address widespread gender-based violence to enjoy a just and democratic society.

"No one country can get ahead if it leaves behind half of its population," he said.

He said gender equality and empowerment of women and eliminating gender-based violence were the most important things that the US and PNG agreed on.

"We have made strides but we have a long way to go. Each and every one of us must continue the fight to ensure the right of every woman and girl," North said.

He said PNG was blessed with



many women leaders and should remove the barriers preventing their success.

North said the theme of this year's forum "Stronger to-

gether: Partnership for equality for women", which the embassy was spearheading with the Department of Community Development, was appropriate because what women leaders needed was partnership.

"That partnership between women and girls, coupled with mutual understanding and commitment, will help shape PNG's future by ensuring that you indeed have one strong and united voice that leads to gender equality and equal rights for women and girls," he said.



Maria rides her way into town

MARIA Ku Kindagi has always dreamt of travelling on a sealed road from Kundiawa town to her Pari village.

Finally, it has come true.

"I am so proud of local MP Tobias Kulang and the Government of Prime Minister Peter O'Neill for giving me and my people a sealed road," she said.

She was in Kundiawa last week when O'Neill opened the first 10.6 kilometres of the sealed road from Kundiawa to Gewa.

She dressed up in her Simbu traditional attire and got on her bicycle to travel around Kundiawa town.

She travelled behind O'Neill's motorcade, tooting the horn for people to make way for her.

Maria Ku Kindagi with her bicycle in Kundiawa. - Picture by ZACH-ERY PER

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Women pray for Bahamas

WOMEN from the ecumenical churches celebrated World Day of Prayer to pray for a selected country around the world.

They prayed for the Bahamas this year with the theme: "Do you know what I have done to you?"

The service was held at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Port Moresby last Friday.

The women performed a drama based on the biblical story about Jesus Christ washing his disciples' feet before the Passover.

Reverend Qoggi Zoggoreng of the

Lutheran Church said although the Bahamas might not be well known to PNG citizens, praying for God's children in any country was important.

Zoggoreng said Christ came to save sinners.

The perfect example was when he washed the disciples' feet.

"The journey is as important as the destination," Zoggoreng said.

The Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, United, Baptist, Salvation Army and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) make up the ecumenical churches.

Group attends UN meeting on women

A DELEGATION of public servants is in New York at the invitation of the United Nations to attend the session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

PNG, Guatemala and Argentina were chosen on their work on gender-based violence.

The work includes the new SMS-alert system for violence victims and the gender-based violence database system.

The SMS-alert system will connect human rights defenders from the communities to family sexual violence action committee secretariats in the provinces.

Through the free of charge SMS-system, human rights defenders will be able to send requests for urgent assistance.

The secretariats will be available 24/7 and will provide support to the victims.

The GBV service database will collect reported cases and identify bottlenecks, monitor the response rates and provide insights.

The delegation is headed by John Kali, the Department of Personnel Management Secretary.

Other officers are from the Department of Community Development and Religion, Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee.

The delegation will meet UN Special rapporteur on violence against women Rashida Manjoo.

Meanwhile, the session was opened yesterday by UN General-Secretary Ban Ki-Moon.

Ban said to reach the goal of equality for women by the year 2030, the key was getting men to change their "mind-sets."

He said while more girls were being educated, women and girls still suffered disproportionately.